India to accelerate the growing India-U.S. economic relations and realise the full potential of bilateral economic ties.

Rail links between India and Nepal

†961. SHRIMATI SAVITA SHARDA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and Nepal have agreed to establish rail links;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when the rail links are likely to be established between the two countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) to (c) With a view to facilitating movement of cargo between Calcutta/Haldia to Birgunj in Nepal via Raxaul in Bihar, a rail link has been established with Indian assistance between Raxaul and Birgunj. For operationalising this link, a Railway Protocol and Customs Agreement would have to be concluded between the two sides. Two rounds of discussions have taken place in May 2002 in Kathmandu and in September 2002 in Delhi. Some progress has been made and the two sides have agreed to continue their discussions with a view to finalizing the Agreement.

Non-Cooperation by Indian Mission in Deportation of Abu Salem

962. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Indian Mission in Lisbon did not extend co-operation to the visiting CBI team for deportation of underworld don help up in Portugal prison;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.